

REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of this application and the benefit of the further interview on September 20, 2005. It is believed that claims 1-21, as amended, are in condition for allowance as discussed at the interview.

Applicants observe the following: The Strezov et al. '948 patent discloses a casting roll surface textured by paralleled grooves and ridges defining V-shaped grooves and ridges with sharp edges. The Office Action states that "Strezov et al. also discloses wherein the texture have surface distribution between 5 and 100 peaks per mm² and an average height of at least 10 microns to 20 microns." Office Action at 3. However, the '948 patent at col. 3, ll. 7-10 states as follows:

"For optimum results it is preferred that the depth of the texture is in the range 15 to 25 microns and the pitch is between 150 and 200 microns. Optimum results have been achieved with rolls in which the depth of the texture is 20 microns and the pitch between adjacent grooves is 80 microns."

Therefore, the statement of the dimensions of a regular pattern of ridges and grooves for "optimum results" does not translate into a random distribution as called for by the presently claimed subject matter. The latest Office Action acknowledges the same in stating that "Strezov et al. lacks the disclosure of the random distribution on the rollers." Office Action at 3. Therefore, it appears agreed that the '948 patent discloses casting rolls with a regular pattern of grooves and ridges in a specific size range.

The latest Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 8-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) relying for the first time on Strezov et al. '948 in view of Bergeron et al., U. S. Patent 4,588,021. Bergeron '021, however, is directed to a belt caster, and does not disclose or suggest casting rolls. Moreover, in the '021 patent, the surface of the belt is grit-blasted so that a coating comprising a non-metallic refractory material distributed substantially uniformly throughout a matrix of high-resistant metal or metal alloy is fusion bonded to the grit-blasted surface of the belt, to serve as an anchor and hold the non-ceramic material. The coating is applied to the belt by thermally spraying a powdered mixture directly onto the grit-blasted surface. In the '021 patent "[t]he coating **controls** and renders more uniform the rate of freezing of the metal being cast, resulting in improved metallurgical properties." Col. 3, ll. 5-8 (emphasis added).

There is no disclosure or suggestion in the Bergeron '021 patent of having the grit-blasted surface in contact with the molten metal, or to provide a protective coating such that the grit-blasted surface covered by the protective coating shows the random distribution texture of discrete projections. Quite to the contrary, the Bergeron '021 patent teaches that the "coating controls" and is what the molten metal sees in terms of providing "surface quality and properties" to the cast product. Bergeron '021, col. 3, l. 4.

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under § 103 for obviousness over Strezov et al. in view of Bergeron et al. '021 in view of Irie '084. It is quite unclear what is relevant to the present claims in the disclosure of the '084 patent. The '084 claims a method of producing cold rolled sheet steel having a notably excellent formability of a particular composition, hot rolling the steel at a total reduction of not less than 90%, finish rolling the steel at a rolling speed of not less than 40 meters per minute and finishing temperature of not lower than 830°C, coiling the hot rolled strip at a temperature of 600-800°C, cold rolling the coiled strip to obtain a cold rolled strip having final gauge and then continuously annealing the cold rolled strip within the temperature range of 700-900°C for ten seconds-five minutes. The '084 patent does not appear to have any relevance to textures on casting roll surfaces in strip casting.

Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-21, as presently amended, are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any further questions or concerns, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner telephone applicants' counsel, Arland T. Stein, Esq., at (614) 233-5104.

Date *December 5, 2005*



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